

Next issue
in two weeks:
Sat., Apr. 2

The Main Street WIRE™

25th Year as Roosevelt Island's Independent Community Newspaper



A Seal at Southpoint This harbor seal (pictured with feathered friend) was hanging out last weekend on the small island just below Southpoint.

Trust for Public Land Tells RIOC: Let's Get Moving on Southpoint Park

by Dick Lutz

The Trust for Public Land last week urged the RIOC Board to move soon to a commitment to build phase one of its plan for Southpoint Park.

In a RIOC Board meeting last week, TPL's Mid-Atlantic Director, Rose Harvey, told Board members, "The time to make a kind of commitment is now, because you all have great momentum. You have had fabulous participation by the community. You have the most amazing consensus of any kind of participatory park design that

we've seen." Harvey was effectively paying tribute to a process carried out by TPL consultant Charles McKinney, who worked with landscape architect Mark K. Morrison to produce three concept plans, then used them to measure community support for various components of the park. Responding community members and organizations leaned strongly toward a "natural" plan and away from commercial or deliberately formal elements.

Harvey told RIOC Board members that TPL believes New York

Octagon Apartments Project Is Back in Court on Thursday

Thursday (March 24) will be an important day in court for the Octagon Apartments project and the Residents Association suit to stop it. Both RIRA and the Roosevelt Island Operating Corporation (RIOC) are due in court for what are expected to be final arguments.

Both sides in the case appeared before Justice William A. Wetzel of the State Supreme Court Friday morning, March 4 (hours after the press deadline for *The WIRE's* March 5 issue), arguing as expected: RIOC saying that the 2002 Roosevelt Island Open Spaces Law specifically permits the Octagon project, RIRA saying that it does not – that the land in question has

long been set aside as parkland and that the law, as written, does not permit "alienation" of the portions being used for two residential wings being attached to the landmarked Octagon structure.

RIOC was represented by Stephen Kass; and MEPT, the current developer of record, by Steven C. Russo. RIRA was represented by Dan Quart, who is associated with Community Board 8 and is a candidate for the City Council seat representing Roosevelt Island.

The New York State Attorney General was also represented in the courtroom, by Robert E. Hernan, an Assistant Attorney General in the Environmental Protection Bureau.

Kass opened with an argument that, because the State Attorney General's office could be called upon to represent RIOC, a State public benefit corporation, it should not be allowed to file a friend-of-the-court brief; the judge dismissed that argument after hearing from Hernan, pointing out that Hernan's presence was as a friend of the court, not representing RIRA.

Have E-Mail? Subscribers to *The WIRE's* e-mail bulletin service received this news on the Octagon lawsuit on the day it happened – Friday, March 4. To subscribe, send an *AddMe* message to bulletins@nyc10044.com.

Chronology was an issue, as was an August, 2004, RIOC resolution approving the project but setting the condition that legislative approval would have to be obtained. Six weeks later, in September, the RIOC Board approved the project again, deleting the requirement for legislative permission. Litigation was started in December, within the 120-day legal window for an action of this type. Meanwhile, site clearing and construction had proceeded.

Justice Wetzel identified the 2002 law as "the core issue." At one point, he cautioned Kass that, in this proceeding, "the greater good" is out of bounds, and he must restrict his findings to matters of law. When Russo said that, within the bounds of the 2002 law, the developer is adding a quarter of an acre (from previously overgrown space containing demolition rubble) to the available parkland at the site and enhancing it, Justice Wetzel responded, "With two 13-story buildings, you're enhancing it?"

Wetzel asked for all papers in the case to be filed before Thursday, March 24, so that he might become familiar with them and be prepared to make a ruling after listening to oral arguments on that date.

The suit did not come up in last week's RIOC Board meeting, except obliquely, in two mentions that certain plans depend upon the availability of income from the Octagon project.

Also at the RIOC Board Meeting...

- RIOC will spend \$350,000 to replace the elevators at the south end of Motorgate. RIOC President Herb Berman said that he had conducted conversations with Manhattan Park, which is responsible for maintaining the north-end elevators. He said, "Apparently, they're not prepared at this juncton to go ahead with their repairs."
- As for a five-year spending plan, RIOC President Herb Berman commented that its implementation will depend on income expected from the Octagon Apartments development – a project that is currently being challenged in court by the Residents Association because it involves open space covered by the 2002 Roosevelt Island Open Spaces law (story, this page).
- The future of the Island's Z-bricks is in question. Berman commented that seniors complain about them, but others feel they are an integral part of Roosevelt Island's charm.
- Public Safety Deputy Chief René Bryan reported "two index crimes" in the past month – including disappearance of a backhoe from the Southtown construction site, which has private security 24/7 – a source of some amusement among RIOC Board members.
- The consultant responsible for overseeing design of Southpoint Park alternatives speculated that the \$150,000/year cost of maintaining phase one of the park could be paid by a snack shop, paying for a full-time gardener and two seasonal workers. The Trust for Public Land urged RIOC to move soon on initial funding (story, this page).

State and RIOC must make a firm commitment to the project before any outside funding – from the City, Federal, and private sources, will be forthcoming. "Our hope – we should probably put it on the table – is that two-thirds of the \$12 million [phase one cost] will come forward from the State and RIOC, payable over time, but committed, so we can begin to put [the park] on the ground. And then we would look at several Federal programs and several City programs that we know will not be available unless the home locality makes the first commitment, and a substantial commitment."

RIOC Board Chair Mary Beth Labate agreed. "We will certainly, sooner or later, have to invest RIOC funds in phase one of this effort... I'm not asking that the Board make that commitment [at today's meeting], but I think we will be asking for that from the Board in the very near future, possibly as soon as the next Board meeting. I think our efforts to leverage any additional funds, as Rose says, will fall on deaf ears if we, as a corporation, are not in a position, or are not willing to put forth some money." Labate added, "It won't be easy. As a Board, we have to see whether, in our financial plan, we will be prepared to commit the resources that are necessary to partner in a meaningful way on this... We certainly want comments on the concept, on the design itself, but where the rubber will hit the road is, are we prepared to commit some of our corporate revenues that we will have in the next year or year and a half, to this initiative?"

The comments by Harvey and Labate came in response to a concern, expressed by resident Board member Mark Ponton, that RIOC might be tempted by big-money offers to waver in a commitment to a park at Southpoint. "The problem is the history that we have here," he said. "We have no

See *Southpoint*, page 6



The fireboat John D. McKean was deployed to the west channel recently in a salute to FDNY Firefighter Joey DiBernardo, who had survived a Morris Heights house fire with a five-story escape by rope, and was recovering across the river in New York Hospital. Two other firefighters died jumping from the building. While the fireboat shot red, white, and blue streams, DeBernardo's comrades unfurled a sign from the top of Island House; they were later interviewed by Channel 11 (inset).



Ross Wollen

RIRA and Performers Rally Tonight for Tsunami Orphans

Members of Roosevelt Island's professional performance community will stage a benefit concert tonight at the Manhattan Park Theater Club. Jazzman Tex Allen, singers Janice Pendarvis, Kay Story, and Mike Daly, guitarist Damon LaScot, and Swing Dancers from the 92nd Street Y all will perform. It's a benefit for *Roosevelt Island House* in Sumatra, Indonesia – an effort of Roosevelt Island-based Orphans International (see ad, page 5).

Letters

To the Editor:

Many times in the last decade I have said, “Roosevelt Island won’t be privatized and shouldn’t be.”

The move to do so has already dangerously divided this community. It has introduced a rancor and bitterness in our conversation, a new contentiousness unleavened by tolerance, much less good will. Friendships have been broken, anxieties heightened, and lives unsettled. The most vulnerable, the elderly, low-income families, the retired and infirm, face an uncertain future and displacement. Starting over without resources is not the American dream. The privateers have made it a nightmare.

The City, however, has lifted this cloud. Perhaps now we can return to the task of creating the “New Town” envisioned by our creators.

For years I have observed you knocking on the wrong door. The City owned the land and would never permit the wholesale dismantling of the affordable housing in the City, much less Roosevelt Island. I never understood why RIRA and *The WIRE* were always worried about Albany when the significant decision was just across the river. You now claim that the 50-year extension of the Mitchell-Lama lease “surprised everyone.” I have asked you many times to read the legislative history of this important bill. It may have been a surprise to you but not to those who know the elementary facts about housing.

To privatize Roosevelt Island would cost the City a billion dollars or more. The crisis in affordable housing is worse than it was in 1970. Now it would have to replace those it has already built before it could begin to address the new need. It would require building 2000 new units. It would also require buying the land (which we now own), building to code (which was lifted), and meeting zoning requirements (which were waived); also new construction costs have skyrocketed. Since our beginning the privateers think only of their money and never about their benefactors – the taxpayers of New York who have subsidized them for decades. For them, greed is more important than gratitude.

Affordable housing is entwined in the lives of millions of our citizens. To rip it apart would be the ultimately folly. And a degradation of our civic conscience.

Islanders will have an opportunity to discuss this further when elected public officials visit here to talk about affordable housing.

Richard Wade

In the days before seatbelts and child car seats, I would stand on the passenger seat of my family’s 1939 Ford as my mother made me a reluctant participant in her shopping expeditions in our Western New York home town. It happened that our route took us past *the orphanage*, a Catholic institution for children without parents. Invariably, Mom would say, “Those poor kids.” She had seven siblings ranging from much older to much younger – and she had a strong sense of the value of family.

In today’s America, such classic orphanages are rare, for so many couples seek the satisfactions of raising children.

But in the Third World, the numbers of orphaned and abandoned children are distressingly high, and the human and social costs are enormous. **Orphans International** – a Roosevelt Island-based charity – is making a brilliant effort to create a better world through care of orphans in several countries, and by seeing each child as a whole person with a future that can make a positive contribution to a better world.

Tonight’s event at Manhattan Park Theater Club will contribute toward creation of **Roosevelt Island House**, one of many steps being taken here to reach out to the most vulnerable victims of the December tsunami. It’s your opportunity to make an important difference in the lives of some very needful children in a way that goes beyond simple necessities. Join your neighbors, but if, by the time you’re reading this, you’ve missed the event, you can still contribute. The address is: Orphans International, 540 Main Street #418, Roosevelt Island, NYC10044.

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To the Editor:

This is in response to the January 26 RIOC Board meeting (transcript at nyc10044.com/wire/2511/wire2511.html) and David Kraut’s comments praising the Public Safety Department (PSD) and how he’s “at a loss to understand where the undertow of criticism and negative comments” regarding PSD comes from.

So PSD made one arrest (after the guy *advertised to a PSD officer his intent to commit a crime that very night*), whoopee! Kraut praised the officers for “showing up despite blizzards and leaving their families to come here.” I left my family and went to work in the snow, too, but that doesn’t make me a hero. This is clearly indicative of the low expectations RIOC has of PSD.

I personally have numerous logs of PSD not showing up or showing up, talking with a perp, and letting him go without an arrest or summons, of PSD telling me they (without RIOC’s knowledge) personally authorized a party in Northtown Park for 75+ people to play ridiculously loud music out of their illegally parked cars and drink alcohol publicly, of times when PSD pulled up outside my apartment window and slept in their scooter vehicle for 90 minutes, of no parking spots available on Main Street because they’re occupied by the Friends of RIOC/PSD Club, not to mention innumerable other occasions where they’ve acted unprofessionally, disrespectfully and seemingly unsupervised. All this has been documented and given to the *appointed* RIOC president Herb Berman. Maybe Berman did not copy any of the RIOC board members on this.

The allocation for PSD in the ‘04-‘05 RIOC budget is projected at \$2.5 million. \$2.5m is outrageous for an overweight, inept, unsupervised troop of clowns. This money could easily pay for private security forces in each building that would then be *accountable* to the management and residents of that building. NYPD would then be responsible to patrol the streets as in *every* other City neighborhood.

The problem is that neither RIOC nor PSD are accountable to the residents they serve. PSD is accountable to RIOC, which is accountable only to Pataki in Albany, not to residents. RIOC keeps hoping we’ll get tired of complaining about it. We will. But we’ll keep complaining, organizing and meeting with our *elected* leaders and we will not rest until we see our tax dollars – City and State – representing *our interests in our neighborhood*.

Damon LaScot

Letters deadline for April 2 issue: Tuesday, March 29
After deadline, letters are considered on a space-available basis.

Letters Policy

The WIRE welcomes letters to the editor, to the community, and to/from officials. Publication on a *Name Withheld* basis will be considered, but the writer’s name, address, and phone number **must** be provided for verification and for our records; *letters submitted anonymously will not be published*. **Preferred method of submission:** E-mail to Letters@MainStreetWIRE.com (plaintext e-mail format preferred, or attach a file), or on a PC-standard 3.5" disk left at the desk at 531 Main Street, addressed to *The WIRE*. **Alternatives:** Typed copy left at 531 Main Street. Clearly handwritten letters will be considered if brief, but we are not able to take telephone dictation of letters. **All letters subject to acceptance and to editing for length and clarity.** Recommended maximum length, 300 words; longer letters will be considered if their content merits the required space.

To the Editor:

Tonight (Saturday, March 19), there will be a marvelous concert at the Manhattan Park Theatre Club starting at 7:30. The quality of the professional cast is reason enough to buy a ticket. But there’s much more:

The concert is a fundraiser for the children orphaned by the tsunami in Sumatra, Indonesia. There are many fine organizations – the Red Cross and UNICEF come to mind – that are dealing with the immediate needs of the region’s injured and displaced. But I don’t know of a single group other than Roosevelt Island’s own Orphans International that is asking the question, “When the children are fed and housed, then what?”

Orphans International was founded by Jim Luce of Eastwood to answer that question. In “campuses” around the world, OI has created oases that will raise orphaned children to be “citizens of the world,” to be literate denizens of the 21st Century, ready to contribute to their societies rather than to be a drain on them.

Tonight’s concert will raise funds for the first house, *Roosevelt Island House*, that will house the first four kids of the 240 that OI plans to shelter in 60 houses in the hard-hit Banda Aceh region of Sumatra. We have the rare opportunity to really make a difference in the lives of these children, for the present crisis and for the decades to come.

Roosevelt Island is blessed with an extraordinary concentration of talented musicians and some of them will entertain you this evening. Please plan to come and please, bring your checkbook. Orphans International is Roosevelt Island’s gift to the world and you’ll be glad you supported it.

Matthew Katz

To the Editor:

Most of the time we humans will readily complain when things go wrong, even slightly, but we become stingy with praise when things go well. So, I’ve decided to take a little time to thank Public Safety.

About two weeks ago, after midnight, I received a phone call from a neighbor and a frantic voice told me that her daughter was unconscious. Since this family doesn’t speak English, they didn’t know what to do but call me.

I called Public Safety immediately to inform them of the situation and then ran over to my neighbor’s apartment. Two Public Safety officers were there in an instant. While they were collecting data on the unconscious woman, a Fire Department EMS crew arrived to take her to the hospital. All of this took only a few minutes. Apparently, Public Safety immediately contacted the FDNY EMS in response to my call.

I am very grateful for the presence of the officers of Public Safety; they are doing such a fine job. I simply don’t understand why some people complain about their service. I wonder what people want and why they are so ungrateful in regard to these, our first responders.

Sonia Jang

President, Roosevelt Island Korean Association

To the Editor:

The Louis Kahn Memorial is a finely designed work. But it does not belong in the middle of our scarce and precious parkland. Its oblique, blocky design does not harmonize with nature or a wooded area. Its imposing, massive design is an obstruction to a fantastic river view that is our valuable heritage – a heritage we should cherish, protect, and preserve.

On the southern tip of the Island we do not need closed walls of solid polished stone and granite that are reminiscent of a foreboding walled fortress. We do not need a large dominating stone structure. We do not need formalized and oppressing stone stairs. We do not need several parallel rows of very un-naturally arranged trees.

We need totally open areas of grasses, shrubs, bushes and trees that birds and lovers of nature can relate to with song in their hearts. We do not need stone walkways. We do not need embankments of stone that we would have to peer over to see the river. We need a pathway of soft comforting grass under our feet naturally leading the way to the water’s edge.

On our Island, any stone structure, such as the granite walkway near the subway, is soon covered with thousands of unsightly long-lasting gull droppings. In a natural grassland area these droppings rapidly vanish with the help of nature’s biological cleanup system – a system that nourishes the grasses, bushes, and shrubs.

All throughout Roosevelt Island there are too many solid stone and brick structures with cold, harsh corners and façades soaring to towering heights. With ever more buildings coming, we need a place to have a rest from these solid, ultra-formal, lifeless, and inflexible formations that are consuming more and more of our free space. We need space to breathe, to feel and enjoy unobstructed nature. Trees are a wonderful free-form living and breathing natural creation of nature. The land has a soul that needs exposure to sun and sky. It should not be buried under stone. Let Southpoint remain natural and be true unto itself.

Martin Atkins

To the Editor:

In the 19 years I am living on this Island this is the first time I feel I must write a letter to the editor.

There was just a knock on my door and, upon opening it to the UPS man, I noticed a note, taped to the door just above the peephole, from the Eastwood Building Committee legal fund announcing to the world that I have not made a donation as of yet.

First of all, it is my decision and only my business if I make a donation or not. I have had visits to my door, envelopes slipped under my door, and now this taped on my door. These community “activists” only know my name and where I live when a donation is needed, but pass me on Main Street or at Trellis or in Gristede’s, and they just walk by and then I’m standing there feeling foolish saying hello to someone who is ignoring me.

I am not in any way commenting on the purpose of the collection since I believe that, too, is my business only. But really, if one has not donated by now one of two things are happening – they cannot afford to make a donation, or they do not wish to make a donation.

Marion Falk

Parking on Main Street is an ongoing problem on Roosevelt Island. We hear many complaints from residents ranging from school bus traffic to cars being left on Main Street for extended periods. There isn't one single solution to address the various parking/traffic issues on Main Street. I would, however, like to remind residents of the parking guidelines.

Main Street is a metered parking zone. This means it is intended for short term use by patrons of the various commercial businesses along Main Street, and for brief drop-offs/pick-ups and deliveries. Meters are located along the street and residents and visitors

should display their parking receipt prominently in their front window.

On a walk along Main Street one recent afternoon, more than half of the vehicles parked on Main Street displayed the New York City Department

of Transportation's handicapped sticker. Several others had handicapped tags hanging on display in the windshield. Public Safety cannot issue tickets to vehicles displaying these permits/stickers.

Also observed were cars that did not display a parking receipt. I have directed our Public Safety Department to begin a more diligent effort to ticket vehicles illegally parked along Main Street. Residents need to be aware that a vehicle that does not display appropriate receipts/stickers/permits will be ticketed. Please inform your relatives, visitors, etc. to be sure to utilize the parking meters. Vehicles which are not removed once ticketed, will be towed at the owner's expense. While I would hope that this does not occur, residents need to be advised that in order to keep Main Street available for appropriate parking uses, long-term parking will not be tolerated. This policy will be

applied uniformly to any car parked illegally on Main Street.

For RIOC's part, I have also directed that no RIOC vehicles are to be parked on Main Street during the day for more than ten minutes. The sole exception is the RIOC Jeep which must be available throughout the day for business purposes. It is sometimes neces-

sary for staff to stop at 591 Main Street to drop off or pick up items. However, I will be enforcing that this should be for no more than 10 minutes. If a visit to 591 extends beyond ten minutes, staff have been directed to utilize the long-term parking at the north end of Main Street or seek special permission from RIOC management to park beyond ten minutes.

Roosevelt Island offers residents and visitors long-term parking at the

north end of Main Street and in the Motorgate garage. In addition, the RIOC Red Buses loop the Island at regular intervals so getting from Motorgate to Main Street is quite easy – and it costs only \$.25, a bargain in this day! I strongly encourage residents to take advantage of these options.

I believe this policy promotes safe use of Main Street and strengthens our local businesses. While it does not fully solve the problem, I do think it will have a positive effect on Main Street.



Herbert E. Berman, President
Roosevelt Island Operating Corp.
e-mail: HBerman@rioc.com

The RIOC Column



Now on the Website –

Wondering when something happened on Roosevelt Island? Check back issues of *The WIRE* at nyc10044.com, where you'll also find the TimeLine, a comprehensive history of the Island.

First and foremost, if you are reading this before Saturday, March 19, at 8:00 p.m., please attend the benefit for the Indonesian children orphaned by the tsunami. This is very much a community effort with so many organizations, performers, and local stores donating time, talent, and merchandise to make this a success – but it needs and deserves your support.

Besides, it will be a lot of fun. So, see you tonight at the Manhattan Park Theater Club (across the street from the ramp to the bridge).

And speaking about the ramp to the bridge – be careful. A neighbor fell into a pothole at the base of that ramp

last week, broke his shoulder, needed extensive surgery and is now recuperating at home in a lot of pain. And while you are watching for potholes, be careful in front of the church plaza as well – there are a number of dislodged tiles and a really deep hole as well.

It's pathetic that this space needs to be dedicated to a list of serious safety hazards on our streets and sidewalks, but, since RIOC feels that no maintenance work can be conducted during the winter, I guess that we need to watch out, occasionally break some bones, and wait. And while we are waiting, we can note the prodigious construction and cement pouring that has proceeded unabated to these many winter months at Southtown and Octagon park, and we can note the repairs being made on streets and sidewalks outside of our fair Island. Also, forget about repairs in the street near Gristede's this year, since RIOC announced at their last Board meeting that they will wait until construction is completed and the heavy trucks finish wrecking our roads.

Having segued to that RIOC meeting, I left work as early as I could, but still was only able to catch the tail end – the part where the projected budget was flashed on the screen and then there was a round of congratulations on the good job everyone was doing. As a reward, the board approved an across-the-board 2.75% raise, having confirmed the shortening of the work week from 40 to 35 hours at last month's meeting – which works out to an increase of over 17% per hour. They announced they will also hire a Chief Financial Officer and an Office Assistant. Then they adjourned for a "five-minute break," after which they would take up the unpleasant chore of listening to the comments and questions from the handful of residents listening



Steve Marcus, President
Roosevelt Island Residents Assn.
e-mail: SteveAtRIRA@verizon.net

Street. We are encouraging all residents interested in the outcome of this case to join RIRA Council members in the courtroom. Unfortunately, the hearing is on a workday, so we understand that many people won't be able to attend, but a good turnout will indicate to the judge that his ruling is important to the community. If it's all possible, please try to attend.

Finally, Gallery RIVAA has a very clear exhibit and video simulation of what the Roosevelt Foundation proposes for Southpoint Park. These folks claim that they can fully fund the construction of the Louis Kahn plan, as well as the clearing and improved access of the area north of the Renwick ruin. Have a look, and be sure to write your opinion of this plan in the log book.

So, Happy Spring – let the repairs begin!

COMING UP

– This Weekend –

Roosevelt Island's Tsunami Orphans Benefit, sponsored by the Roosevelt Island Residents Association, **tonight** (Sat., Mar. 19), 8:00 p.m., Manhattan Park Theater, featuring the Island's professional music and dance performers, including ◀Kay Story, Janice Pendarvis▶, Damon LaScot, Tex Allen, Mike Daly, and others. \$20 (seniors, disabled \$10). Doors open at 7:30. Refreshments available.

Orphans International Week at Trellis, today through Fri., Mar. 25. Orders/servings over \$20 produce \$1 for OI (see ad, page 5).

◀**Works of Portrait Artist Dianne Robbins**, continuing through the month, in the Rivercross window gallery, presented by the Mother Earth Committee.

The Louis Kahn FDR Memorial for Southpoint, continuing through Mar. 27 at Gallery RIVAA, Wed. and Fri., 6-9 p.m.; Sat.-Sun., 11 a.m.-5 p.m. (See ad, page 6.)

Soft-Sculptured Dolls by Rebecca Knell, on display in the gallery window at 625 Main Street, continuing through mid-April. ▶



– The Coming Week –

Eastwood Building Committee Auction, Sat., Mar. 26, 7:00 p.m., Senior Center, 546 Main Street. Donations of goods and services being accepted now. Call **212-755-4089**. (See ad, page 6.)

– Future Events –

Toastmasters Public Speaking Group, Mon., Mar. 28, 8:00 p.m. Visitors welcome. Additional information: **212-751-9577**.

The Main Street WIRE – Next issue, **Sat., Apr. 2**. (To receive e-mail bulletins between issues, send an "Add Me" message to Bulletins@MainStreetWIRE.com.) **Advertising Deadline:** Ads in the paper, Thursday, Mar. 24; decision on fliers for *The Bag*, Mon., Mar. 28; inserts due Thur., Mar. 31. **Future issues:** Apr. 16, 30; May 14; June 4, 18; July 2, 30; Aug. 27; Sept. 10, 24; Oct. 8, 22; Nov. 5, 19; Dec. 3, 17. **News phone, 212-826-9055**; urgent matters **917-617-0449**. **Phone** for display and classified advertising placement and information, **212-751-8214**. **To list your organization's Island-related event here**, e-mail information to ComingUp@MainStreetWIRE.com, or leave it, addressed to *The WIRE*, at the lobby desk at 531 Main Street; provide a telephone number for follow-up questions. There is no charge for such listings.

There is no charge to list Island events here. E-mail information to ComingUp@MainStreetWIRE.com or leave copy at the lobby desk at 531 Main Street, addressed to *The WIRE*. Please provide a phone number for possible follow-up.

La Leche League meeting for breastfeeding and pregnant women, **Mon., Apr. 4**, 1:00 p.m., 20 River Road #5P. Information: **212-832-1188**.

Residents Association Common Council Meeting, **Wed., Apr. 6**, 8:00 p.m., Chapel of the Good Shepherd (lower level). Open to all; a public-session opportunity to address the Council is included at the start of each meeting.

Art Auction Benefit for Orphans International to Build Roosevelt Island House for Tsunami Orphans, **Sat., Apr. 9**, 12:00-4:00, Gallery RIVAA, 527 Main Street. Viewing at 12:00, bidding 1:00-4:00. Cash and checks only. Refreshments.



Toastmasters Public Speaking Group, **Mon., Apr. 11**, 8:00 p.m. Visitors welcome. Additional information: **212-751-9577**.

RIOC Board of Directors meeting, **Thur., Apr. 14**, 9:30 a.m., Chapel of the Good Shepherd.

Book Discussion Group at the Library, **Thur., Apr. 21**, 6:30 p.m., *Passing*, by Nella Larsen. Copies of book available at the branch.

Toastmasters Public Speaking Group, **Mon., Apr. 25**, 8:00 p.m. Visitors welcome. Additional information: **212-751-9577**.

Senior Center

Monday
10:00, **Computers for Beginners**
10-11, **Latchhook Class**
10-11:30, **English as 2nd Language**
10:30, **Blood Pressure Screening**
12:30, **"Oldies" Movies**
1:00, **Tai Chi**
7:00, **Dance Class** (Beginners)

Tuesday
10:00, **Chinese Massage**
10:30, **Shoppers' Bus**
2:00, **Bingo**
6:00, **Yoga Class**
7:30, **Games** (RISA)

Wednesday
9:15, **Stay Well**
10:00, **Computers**
10:00, **Spanish Class**
10:30, **Shoppers' Bus**

12-2, **Painting & Sculpting**
7:00, **Pokeno** (RISA)
Thursday
9:30, **Chinese Massage**
10:30, **Creative Arts**
12:30, **Movie**
7:00, **Dance**

Friday
9:30, **Yoga**
10:30, **Computers**
1:00, **Bridge**
7:00, **Games** (RISA)
Saturday
7:30, **Bingo** (RISA)

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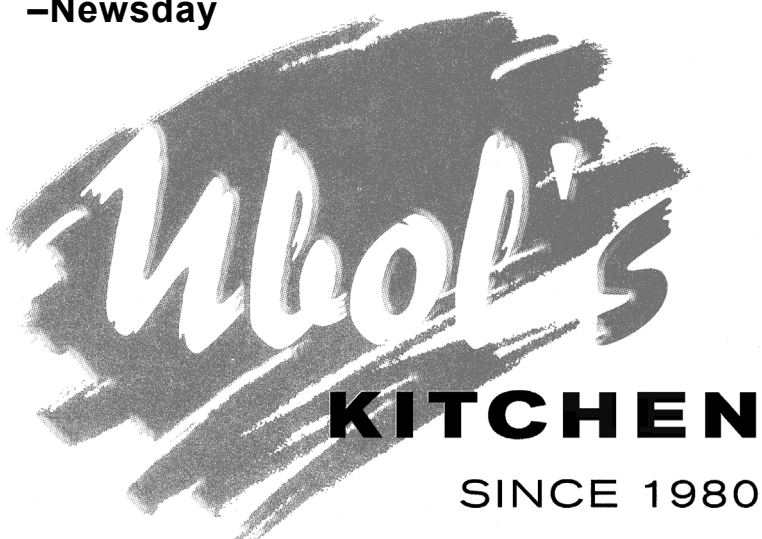
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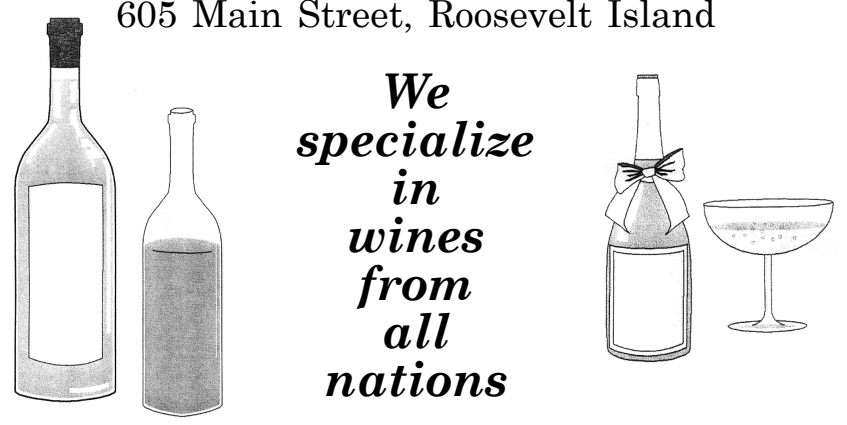
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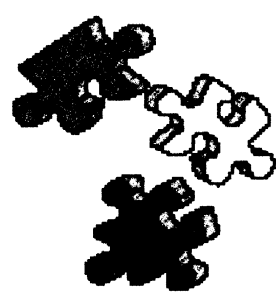
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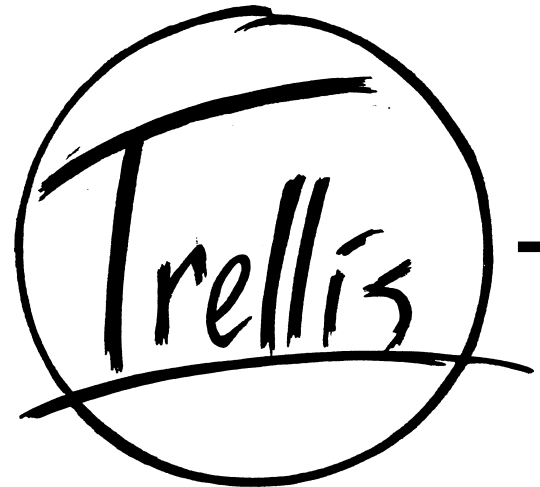
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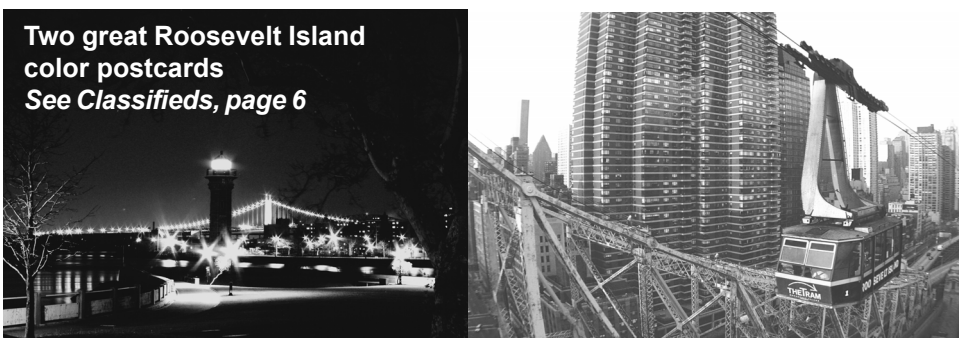
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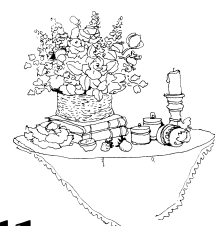
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Southpoint from page 1

trouble starting things. The problem is that the thing that gets finished is not the thing that gets started.”

Ponton continued, “My feeling is that we should proceed... I like what I see [in TPL’s Wild Gardens / Green Rooms plan]. I think less is more; grass is better than concrete... but if we are going to do this, we ought to do *this*, not, ‘by the way somebody wants an umbrella shop there because he found some loophole in the law.’ We ought to do *this*, or we ought to do something else that we all agree on – not this, and then tweaking for something else that comes up later on.”

Resident Board member Patrick Stewart reminded Ponton of a “something else” that came up in the mid-’90’s during the RIOC presidency of Dr. Jerome Blue. “There is



Rose Harvey, Mid-Atlantic Director for the Trust for Public Land, says her organization in ready to move on phase one of Southpoint Park, and says that phase could be completed within two years.

some history... That has been tried before – the Marriott Hotel. What stopped the Marriott Hotel was a concentrated effort, on the part of the citizens of this community, to fight it. There were other issues to build things that were considered by the community to be inappropriate, and the community, through the Residents Association, fought those things. And I do believe – the power of money is the greatest of all – but I do believe here that, with the power of this community, this City, this State, and so on, it will lessen the impact [of temptations to deviate from the plan]. We’ve talked about hotels down there; we’ve talked about amusement parks down there, about the Dali Lama being down there – literally – and any number of things. And we’ve also talked about just planting the place full of daisies. To me, as a member of the committee [working on this project], there has been an incredible amount

of work done [by and for TPL], a tremendous amount of community input done. I do believe there is a tremendous amount of political support for it. That is not to say any of those entities are not susceptible to the almighty dollar, but I personally believe that if the community is committed to this, and that while there is always the danger, I believe – I hope – that this exceptional good work will prevail.”

Harvey pointed out that City and Federal grants to create a park at Southpoint could effectively preclude detours from creation of a park: “If State money is forthcoming [and] Federal money is forthcoming... that restricts it. It is a legal restriction on the use, if you get State money for parkland, you must sign a commitment that it will *stay* parkland. So it’s an additional protection.”

Resident Board member David Kraut emphasized the need for RIOC to put initial funding into the plan: “We can wish a park, we can all be in favor of a park, but unless we know we’re going to be able to put up some money, find some money, get some money, dig out some money...” Referring to the Wild Gardens phase one plan projected on a screen, Kraut added, “I happen to know there is buried treasure down there, and if you dig up the ground so it looks like that [plan on the screen] when it’s finished, you’ll have the treasure. But unless there’s actual funding in place or assurance that we will find it, no resolution of this Board has any meaning at all.”

Labate agreed: “Absolutely. That’s the crux of it.”

She added a comment about a plan for a Franklin D. Roosevelt memorial, designed by Louis Kahn, on the southern portion of Southpoint: “I’ve had some discussions on the Louis Kahn Roosevelt Memorial... This morning I met with the FDR memorial group, and they are in perfect agreement with us that nothing we do in phase one would preclude the memorial from going forward. They’re looking at the southern 2.5 acres. I have invited them to present their plan to us [at our April meeting]. It’s been around for a while, and I think it’s good to clear up any... to refresh any misconceptions about the plan. I just want you to know that it’s still on the table. Again, I think if we’re going to be successful, as a Board if we’re going to agree, if we’re going to be successful in finding other partners, it’s very important that we go into this with a unified voice.”

“I think we will scare any potential funder away if the FDR people are fighting with the RIOC people, Living Library is fighting... Who’s going to want to fund it? I don’t think we would want to do it as a corporation if it is immediately met with animosity and tension. So I’m not suggesting that we shouldn’t debate the design, but I am suggesting that if it gets mired in acrimony, we could put these plans on the shelf like a few other plans have been placed.”

Closing the discussion, Labate thanked TPL. “They have taken on this project without a penny of funding to do it. They’ve done it with great professionalism and thoroughness.”

A partial word-for-word transcript of the discussion quoted here is posted on *Website NYC10044* with this issue of *The WIRE*.

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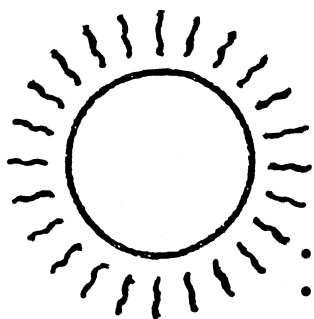
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